



City news,
features
and
updates

This Week in Huntsville

Council approves development agreement

Containment Solutions slated to begin construction in 2015

City Council recently voted to move forward on a development agreement with Containment Solutions, Inc., a decision which is envisioned to bring both industry and additional employment opportunities to Huntsville.

The project will entail the construction of a new 100,000 square foot manufacturing facility to produce fiberglass underground storage tanks. The location of the facility is slated for American Legion Road, off of FM 2821.

The anticipated start date for construction is during the second quarter of 2015.

"I am very pleased the Council has approved moving forward on this project," said Mayor Mac Woodward. "This industrial project will provide good jobs with strong benefits, and it will add value to our tax rolls and hopefully residents to our community."

During the December 16 City Council meeting, Director of Community and Economic Development Aron Kulhavy presented detailed information on the project, including total cost and the anticipated number of employees.

"The project would initially require an estimated \$12 million investment in land, buildings and equipment," Kulhavy said. "In its fifth year, the company plans to add two additional molds for storage tank creation which will facilitate a 50 percent increase in production as a whole."

"With respect to staffing levels, Containment Solutions plans to employ approximately 65 hourly employees and 10 salaried employees initially, and the average annual hourly salary with benefits is estimated at \$60,000."

Kulhavy also outlined a proposed incentive package which would address both infrastructure development and job creation for Walker County residents.

"The City proposes using a cash rebate incentive for this project," he said. "The first portion of the incentive, estimated at \$300,000, would be a reimbursement for infrastructure development, i.e. water, sewer and streets to the project location."

"The second portion would be for job creation for Walker County residents, wherein for a period of three years a cash payment would be made to the company in the amount of \$2,500 per employed Walker County resident. The total cap for all incentives would be \$650,000."

For more information, visit Containment Solutions Web site at <http://www.containmentsolutions.com>.



We appreciate you, This Week in Huntsville readers!!

With readership hitting record levels, new opportunities to spotlight City programs and partnerships and a range of special issues released during 2014, it has been an incredible year for the City's digital publication!

With a new year just around the corner, we want to hear from YOU, our faithful readers, about what we could do to make the publication even better!

Are there stories or types of information you wish we would cover? Have any of our special issues – from the Texas Department of Transportation feature released in March to the disaster kit preparation issue released in August to the holiday issue of late November – sparked interest in any other areas?

Let us know! Contact the City Secretary's office at (936) 291-5403 or (936) 291-5413 or via email at citysecretary@huntsvilletx.gov

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Solid Waste/Recycling holiday closures - Residential and commercial users affected

Christmas holiday

The City of Huntsville Solid Waste Transfer Station will observe the Christmas holiday on Wednesday, December 24, 2014 and Thursday, December 25, 2014. Due to closure for the Christmas holiday, there will be no regularly scheduled heavy trash pick-up on Wednesday, December 24, 2014. There will be commercial garbage pickup for that date.

There will be no collection residentially or commercially on Thursday, December 25, 2014. Only on the following Monday or Tuesday collection days will excess bagged garbage outside of the residential garbage carts be collected. Customers with collection on Thursday, December 25, 2014 will have recycling collected on the following Thursday, January 1, 2014.

Businesses (commercial customers) with a Thursday, December 25, 2014 collection day and with commercial dumpsters, roll-offs or compactors will be collected on Wednesday, December 24, 2014 or Friday, December 26, 2014.

The Solid Waste Disposal and Recycling Facility will be closed to the public on Wednesday, December 24, 2014 and Thursday, December 25, 2014. The Recycling Drop-Off Center, located at 590 IH-45 North, will be closed to the public on Wednesday, December 24, 2014 and Thursday, December 25, 2014.

New Year's Day

The City of Huntsville Solid Waste Transfer Station will be open for business on New Year's Day, Thursday, January 1, 2015. There **will be** regularly scheduled collection both residentially and commercially. The Recycling Facility will be closed.

If you have any questions about the garbage collection, the Solid Waste Transfer Facility, or the Recycling Drop-Off Center, please call the Solid Waste Division at 936-294-5743.

MAJOR PROJECTS UNDER CONSTRUCTION

List includes Project - Valuation - Location

Hampton Inn Hotel - \$4,000,000.00 - 120 Ravenwood Village Dr
Apartments - \$569,480.00 - 1239 20th Street
Physical Therapy Clinic - \$340,000.00 - 540 IH 45 S, Suite C
Retail Space Finish Out - Ross - \$990,135.00 - 249 B IH 45 S
Retail Space Shell (TBD) - \$486,000.00 - 245 IH 45 S
Multi-Family Dwellings - 2 Duplexes - \$602,530.00 - 3109 Elks Dr
Lease Space Finish- Offices - \$150,000.00 - 168 Col Etheredge Blvd Ste B
Multi-Family Dwellings- Four Units - \$140,000.00 - 1400 Sycamore Ave
35' x 278' Airplane Hangar - \$210,000.00 - 831 Airport Dr
Medical Imaging Center - \$268,000.00 - 540 IH 45 S, Ste B
Lumber Shed - \$120,000.00 - 936 SH 190, Bldg A
Commercial Warehouse - \$40,000.00 - 1396 SH 75 N
Medical Clinic Finish Out (DaVita Dialysis) - \$49,000.00 - 521 IH 45 S Ste 20
Interior Finish- Office - \$30,000.00 - 861 SH 19
Interior Finish- Museum - \$10,000.00 - 1501 University Ave
Medical Clinic- Site & Shell Only - \$200,000.00 - 3231 Woodward Dr
Retail Space Finish Out - Sally Beauty - \$78,000.00 - 245 IH 45 S, Ste E
Retaining Wall - \$400,000.00 - 2000 Sycamore Ave
New Commercial Warehouse - \$115,000.00 - 7130 F SH 75 S
Lease Space Finish- Offices - \$6,000.00 - 266 FM 247 B
Lease Space Finish- Retail - \$6,000.00 - 266 FM 247 C
Fire Repair of Apartment Building - \$75,000.00 - 700 Hickory Dr
New Retail Sales (Stripes) - \$1,200,000.00 - 2530 Sam Houston Ave
New Multi-Family Dwellings (4 Buildings) - \$7,000,000.00 - 2000 Sycamore Ave
New Retail Sales (Smiley's #2) - \$600,000.00 - 104 SH 190
Lease Space Finish- Restaurant - \$257,000.00 - 2023 Sam Houston Ave, Ste B
New Retail Sales (Kroger) - \$10,500,000.00 - 223 IH 45 S
New Retail Sales (Smiley's #3) - \$650,000.00 - 3612 Montgomery Rd
CVS Drop Box - \$80,000.00 - 2433 Sam Houston Ave
New Commercial Building - \$500,000.00 - 3639 Daisy Ln



Christmas tree disposal - January 5

The Streets Department will pick up Christmas trees (not artificial) at the street's edge from Monday, January 5, 2015 through Friday, January 9, 2015 only. All trees must be on the curb by Monday, January 5, 2015.

"Our Streets Department will drive down every street in Huntsville once between January 5 and January 9 to collect non-artificial Christmas trees, so it is important that if anyone wants their tree removed, they have it outside by the morning of January 5," said Esther Herklotz, Solid Waste Services superintendent. "When preparing a tree for pick-up, make sure all ornaments, tinsel and foil are removed because the trees will be going into a green composting pile."

City residents may also take their Christmas trees (not artificial) to the Solid Waste Disposal Facility, free of charge with their current City of Huntsville residential utility bill, during regular business hours. Christmas trees (not artificial) must be unloaded at the brush pile only.

City, Tourism Web site redesign underway

Cross-departmental staff team working together to build new pages

The City of Huntsville is in the process of creating two new Web sites – one for the organization as a whole and a second for the Tourism and Cultural Services Department.

According to Chris Vasquez, Information Technology Director, the new Web sites will be developed through CivicPlus following a cross-departmental study of the existing pages.

“We have put together a team of 15 City employees from all of the City’s major departments to work together on designing and optimizing our new Web sites,” Vasquez said. “To begin the process, we’re asking all team members to review various Web sites created by CivicPlus and make a note of their likes and dislikes on each page.”

“This will help us determine how we would like our new site to look and function.”

Vasquez said during the site review, the members of the staff team will each pay particular attention to their areas of expertise, looking for the best tools and methods of organization used on the sample sites.

“We want our team to look not only at visual elements, like color schemes and overall design, but also at functional elements like menus, site tools and links,” he said. “This will ensure that we end up with Web sites that not only draw in our users, but make it easy for them to find the information they need.”

The same team will also be responsible for narrowing down the material to be included on the new sites, Vasquez said.

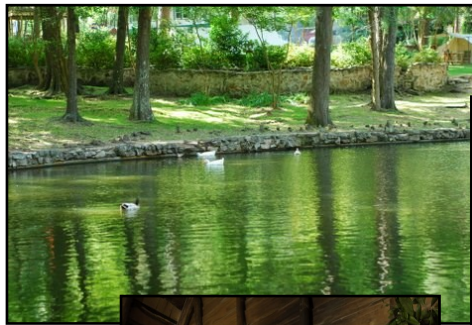
“After reviewing other sites created by CivicPlus, we’re also asking the team to review their respective departments’ pages to determine what material – whether it is currently available or should be added – should be integrated into the new pages to maximize utility,” he said.

Once the staff team has completed its review of the sample sites and the City’s current Web material, the next step will be relaying the findings to CivicPlus and beginning the development process.

Vasquez said the entire redesign effort should take approximately six months to complete, meaning the new sites could be up and running by Summer 2015.

For more information, contact Vasquez at (936) 291-5429.

City seeking photos!



The Web site redesign process will also involve the collection of photographs from in and around Huntsville, and staff is currently working to gather strong, visually appealing photos for use on the new pages.

Do you have a photo you would like to see featured on our new Web site, or perhaps on one of the City’s social media pages? Send it our way by January 5!

For more information, contact the City Secretary’s office at (936) 291-5403 or (936) 291-5413.

City employees take part in SHSU Leadership Academy

City employees Chris Vasquez and Marla Diers are currently taking part in a nine-month leadership academy sponsored by Sam Houston State University, working with representatives from several major Walker County entities.

The High Potential Employee Leadership Academy – which is in its second year – involves a series of monthly development sessions that address key leadership topics and specific focus groups.

The program, which began in August 2014, will continue through May 2015.

“This leadership academy has been a wonderful experience – I really feel like I’ve grown,” said Vasquez, who serves as the Information Technology Director for the City. “The best part for me has been building a relationship with the mentor you’re assigned as part of the program.

“My mentor – Bill Dawley, a senior Vice President with Amegy Bank – has given me a lot of great insight on how to handle a large workload, be less stressed and just be a better person overall.”

Diers, whose program mentor is Huntsville attorney Hope Knight, also said the opportunity to learn from a seasoned professional is highly valuable.

“Hope and I meet on a regular basis to discuss leadership topics and styles,” said Diers, who serves as the Human Resources Manager for the City. “I feel I’ve gained valuable knowledge and perspective from getting to know her.”

City employees Marla Diers and Chris Vasquez began the High Potential Employee Leadership Academy in August 2014.



Human Resources Director Julie O'Connell speaks to participants of the High Potential Employee Leadership Academy during a mock City Council meeting on December 11.

The program, which includes nine unique leadership experiences, brings individuals from a range of major entities together for courses on development, organizational culture, decision making and more.

“Being a part of this experience has allowed me to meet people I would never have known otherwise,” Vasquez said. “I’ve had the opportunity to meet and work with leaders from the Texas Department of Criminal Justice, Huntsville Independent School District, Sam Houston and many more.”

Diers said she has also enjoyed the diversity of the classes, with respect to both the range of experiences afforded to participants and the guest speakers who work with the program.

“Leadership Academy participants interact as a team to work through ‘mock’ real life experiences while hearing from individuals who have weathered similar challenges,” she said. “From City Manager Matt Benoit to TDCJ Executive Director Brad Livingston, these speakers have shown us the true nature of leading, supporting and impacting an organization.”

For more information on the leadership academy, visit <http://www.shsu.edu/dept/leadership/>.

New Year's Eve safety for partygoers and party throwers

If you are attending New Year's Eve parties and celebrations:

- If you drink, don't drive.
- Plan ahead and always designate a sober driver before the party or celebration begins.
- If you are impaired, call a taxi, use mass transit, or get a sober friend or family member to come pick you up. Or, stay where you are until you are sober.
- Take the keys from someone if you think he/she is too impaired to drive.



If you are hosting a New Year's Eve party:

- Plan ahead by naming a "designated driver." Make this your responsibility as the host.
- Contact a local cab company to provide rides for your guests.
- Serve non-alcoholic beverages as an option to your guests.
- Stop serving alcohol to your guests several hours before the party ends.
- Provide your guests with a place to stay overnight in your home.

Source: USA.gov